

*Collaborate on shared goal of preparing students to compete for jobs in the global economy*

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, Members of the **New Democrat Coalition** met with **Michelle Rhee**, founder of StudentsFirst and former Washington, D.C. Schools Chancellor, to discuss the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Under the leadership of the **New Democrat Coalition Education Task Force** Co-Chairs, **Representatives Susan Davis**

(CA-53) and

**Jared Polis**

(CO-2), the New Dems are positioned to play a leadership role in efforts to reform the K-12 education system and make it the most competitive in the world. Today's meeting was an opportunity for Members to hear first-hand Rhee's experiences implementing reforms at the local level, discuss priorities moving forward, and collaborate on ways to better incentivize innovation and excellence in our schools to prepare students for college and jobs in the 21st century global economy.

"There is no question that our education system is in need of reform and we must step up to the challenge now to ensure that today's students, as well as future generations, are prepared to compete in the 21st century. As the New Dems continue to focus on efforts to reform our education system, it is critical we hear from those on the frontlines of this issue. Michelle Rhee is a recognized and respected voice on education reform and I am pleased she was able to join us for this very important discussion," said **Rep. Joe Crowley** (NY-7), Chair of the New Democrat Coalition.

"I am honored to stand with the New Democrats as we seek to build a better educational system for America's children. While most of StudentsFirst's advocacy work is focused on helping craft and mobilize support for state and local legislation, there is so much Congress can do to encourage the states to adopt the critical policies that will improve the nation's schools. If the U.S. is to regain its position as the world leader in education, we must work together to implement the strategies we know work," said **Michelle Rhee**, Founder and CEO of StudentsFirst.

"As those who advocate education reform, we must insist on making student achievement the top priority," said **Rep. Jared Polis** (CO-2), co-chairman of the New Democrats Education Task Force. "In order to ensure that every child attends an excellent school, we must challenge the status quo to ensure innovative choices, demand teacher effectiveness, and use data to drive instruction. That must be the test for education proposals from the local level all the way to the U.S. Congress."

The New Dem meeting with Rhee comes as momentum is building to fix the K-12 education system, most recently with Education Secretary Arne Duncan's announcement that 82% of American public schools could be labeled as "failing" if current law is not updated. At today's meeting, the New Democrats highlighted their commitment to working with the Administration, colleagues in the House and Senate, and leaders in the education field to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

*The New Democrat Coalition is a Coalition of 43 members of the U.S. House of Representatives who are dedicated to the prosperity and security of American families and business. Founded in 1997, the NDC provides Members of Congress with the opportunity to advance a common sense policy agenda focused on empowering the U.S. to grow economically and maintain a vibrant job market, preserving the U.S. standing as the world's leader in innovation and technological advancement, and strengthening our economic and national security. For more information, visit the New Dems website at <http://ndc.crowley.house.gov>*

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